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creative writing

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THE SAVOIR FAIRE EXTENDS A SPECIAL
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on the way to las cruces,
new mexico

william
mcgrew

Mountain tops and
banging eyes and sunlit smiles
where the natives
learn to see with their minds
and rocks paint photographic memories in starlight
what is this feeling
of now
I do not know, but I like it
birds sing and fly
across a thousand plateaus
white grass and I dream in green
as I walk and walk again
in cars and trains my eyes bend to eternity
and I imagine paradise covering me
in baptismal waters drenched and reborn
in the valley of perversion
my ears bent to youth
collectively an orchestra singing in celebration
of travel and I feel guilt and happiness
the smoke rises from a tumultuous city in the distance
and we cannot escape the circus lights
and we cannot escape the drive ahead
and we don't want to



Wash Day Lauren Gelpi

my enchanted bayou

diana

wollschlaeger

It is a muggy, sweltering day, one of those days where the air is so thick you could almost spread it on a piece of bread. My chores are finished, and it is time to escape from the house. The screen door slams shut with the report of a shotgun. I hear my mother yelling as I bound across the yard. The grass is soft and springy under my bare feet, the sun as hot on my back as a cast iron skillet frying bacon. I slow down once I reach the dusty shell road. The small, white shells used to pave the road are razor sharp. Only careful walking would avoid cuts on my feet. A chalky white dust rises from the shells and covers everything on either side with a thin, ghostly powder. The static love song of the cicada fills the air as I approach the end of the road. I pause for just a second to stand in the shade of a majestic pine tree. Just beyond that heap of sticky, red clay lies another world. I have a secret world filled with all the mystery and adventure an eight-year-old little girl could want.

My hands sink into the damp, slimy clay as I scramble up the mound; my feet are slipping trying to gain purchase. Sliding down the other side, I wipe my grimy hands on the backside of my well-worn shorts. Dirty sweat trickles down my face and neck. I feel a sense of peace overtake me as I wander down the ancient dirt path. Here, the air is cooler, sheltered by the patchwork canopy of hundreds of different trees rising from the soft, sandy earth. As the path twists deeper into the woods, flat spans of stagnant water begin to overtake the dry earth. Green blobs of vegetation cover the surface like a smothering wet wool blanket. I inhale deeply. The air tastes dank and stale, filled with the scent of decomposing leaves and dead, decaying things. The pine trees begin to give way to the unearthly twisted shapes of the cypress

trees, guarded by their armies of misshapen knees, all protruding from the muddy water. I feel the eyes of a cornucopia of slithering things upon me. My sense of peace gives way to definite unease. I shiver as chills run down my back. I slap at my leg as sharp stings invade my skin, leaving me itchy and covered in bright red welts. Like a lost princess in a fairytale, I know I must push on to get to my kingdom.

What is this? Across my path lies a new obstacle. Is it a dragon? Perhaps it is a swamp monster. Dry, grey skin covers its outside. One end disappears into the boggy water on my left, as the other rises from the ground covered with snakelike tentacles twisting in every direction. I grab a heavy stick and stab at the beast. When it refuses to move, I scramble over the top. Parts of the skin peel away at the touch of my hand. I run a short distance down the path until I feel safe. Looking back over my shoulder, I notice the beast has yet to move. I smile, knowing I conquered the fallen tree with grace and courage.

As I continue on my journey, I swing my make shift sword at the few tall grasses that line the path. Very little grows here. Even the brightest of the sun's rays are not able to break through the shelter of the trees. Somewhere above me, a loud screech sounds a warning to all the local inhabitants that an intruder is close. Abruptly, the cicadas stop their song, and for a brief moment, there is nothing but an eerie quiet. A soft plop sounds in the distance as a small-unknown creature seeks the safety of the water. As if directed by a master composer, the buzzing symphony starts all at once. I imagine they are trying to calm the swamp with their song. I quietly press on, so as not to disturb nature's music.

It is not long before my winding path takes a sharp turn, and I begin to hear the manic laughter of children. Suddenly, the dark, foreboding trees give way. The trail spits me out into the sunshine, and there before me is the object of my quest. Blinding me, rays of sunshine sparkle on the water like a million

tiny gems. I quickly dance from foot to foot in the scorching hot, white sand, as I peel off my clothing to reveal my swimsuit underneath. I rush to join my friends in the cool, clear water of English Bayou, instantly washing away all the sweat and grime of the journey. As we splash and play, time rushes by like a runaway train. Before long, little yellow lights begin to twinkle like magical fairies, warning us it is time to head home. The songs of the cicada have given way to the night voices of thousands of chirping tree frogs.

Courage bolstered by the company of friends, I drag my exhausted, sun burnt body back through the swamp. Ahead loom the shadowy cypress trees, waving their shrouds of grey moss in the evening breeze. The area takes on a blue grey tint, as a soft mist rises from the sluggish waters. We slowly pick our way along the curvy path. Carefully, we watch out for snakes and the twisting, winding roots that reach up like a cruel bully ready to trip you. Finally, we reach the clay mound, and there we part company, each going his or her own way.

I stop to look back and think on my adventure. Tomorrow when I make my journey, I will not be a lost princess. No, tomorrow I will be an Indian squaw on a quest to save my tribe. I will make little pots from the clay mound and set them in the sun to dry. I will weave a headband of long grass reeds. Tomorrow, I will have another amazing day of adventure on my Enchanted Bayou.



Beetlejuice Melanie Curry

free

thomas
wilttheis

Running,
Running down the lamp lit street,
listening to the patter of my feet.
My breathing is ragged,
from fear or exertion I do not know.
I just run,
I just go.
I run for fear of the Parralli Ro,
My master in this baneful world.

I stop at the end of the street,
an intersection my feet come to meet.
Which turn do I take?
The right is darkened,
The left is light.
Which way do I take flight?

My ears pick up a sound,
the sound of feet running towards me.
No time to think,
I run to the right.
I pray that the darkness will ease my plight.
Hopefully the temple priests will bring me life,
not slavery and death I have left this night.

I run blindly into the dark,
The coolness of twilight brings me strength and hope.
I slow in my running,
my breathing comes calm.

I listen to the sounds, but strangely none are there.

I begin to walk to the end of the street.
The temple grounds I come to meet.
My hope I see in this building of white,
this place will be the end of my plight.
I walk up the steps to those doors of hope,
when all of a sudden I trip on a rope.
I look up and see my Parralli Ro,
Why? Oh why does it end like so?

My captors bind me and take me down the steps.
My hope left behind me,
My death lies ahead of me.

I am taken down the road to the intersection of old.
I look in age old expectancy to my Parralli Ro.
He signals my captors to take me down the lightened road.
They take me to the grace of light,
the one place my death comes to sight.
In the middle of the square that opens at this street,
lies a pyre of death my body comes to meet.

My captors watch as my skin burns away,
hoping for my screams of pain,
But all I do is smile.
I laugh as my body burns away,
For they have finally set me free.



VanGogh's Skull With a Cigarette Melanie Curry

on the impossible past

zachary
cates

Edging slowly out from between two square buildings, the man swung his head around haphazardly to take in a full view of the street. It was made of nothing more than dry packed dirt and was lined with empty merchant stalls and identical buildings, all dusty and weather beaten. Where yesterday life may have been present, today in its absence was a deserted strip of Earth, void of the customary throngs of crowds, chanted calls of peddlers, and pretend secret whispers of gossip, and in the center of this isolation stood the man. His clothes were the commonplace robes, but their cleanliness and lack of wear made him stand out against his surroundings – he would have to remember that for next time. He had chosen this spot, or one like it, hoping to slip in unnoticed, to blend in and then to fade away, but as he walked the streets, he realized he did not know how to get to what he wanted to blend into. His arriving in one of the temporarily deserted parts of town had put him far away from where he wanted to go, and the streets, all looking alike to him, lying empty and unmarked, offered up no help. Now he felt flustered; the Sun had risen high and hot overhead and the man began to wither under its rays. How long had he been wandering, several hours?

He saw signs of life but no humans other than himself. He had begun to think that he was alone in the town, wondering at the prospect of having an entire city to himself to do with as he pleased until the faint sounds of a crowd finally drifted their way to him. They guided his sandaled feet toward their origin, setting them on a more focused, direct path. As the sounds grew louder, he started to see other people, all running, shuffling, or scurrying in the same direction as himself. He quickly fell in line behind them. The roar of the crowd was growing louder with each foot-

step, and abruptly the traveller turned a corner and found what he had been looking for.

He was just outside of the central part of the town now, and before him was a road, much larger than the one from where he had started, that cut through the heart of the city and continued to sprawl far beyond its gates. Right now the road was empty. Instead of traveling on it, the town's inhabitants, seemingly everyone who lived here or in nearby towns or had ever lived anywhere at any time the man guessed to himself, were lining it on both sides, packed in so tightly that only those in the back were able to move. With everyone speaking at once, the crowd had a single, raucous voice. Newly arrived, the back is where the man found himself, cut off from seeing the road for himself by the innumerable heads and shoulders of strangers. He had hoped to come earlier to keep this from happening, but his arriving in the outer area of town out of caution and his lack of direction had cut off his vision of the road. He stood fretting that his trip would be fruitless and debating if it would be worth it to try it again when voices coming from closer to the road suddenly called out, cutting through the din of the crowd, sending everyone surging forward.

The crowd's collective voice focused and became more intense, but the man and those he had followed here were excluded from their revelry. He now truly began to despair until his eyes fixed upon a mule-led cart. It may have once carried into the city exotic fruits from far away groves or fine dyed silks for the town's wealthy, but now it stood on the edge of the crowd, empty and hastily abandoned. The man rushed over to it and clumsily pulled himself into the back of it, finding himself standing not any closer to the road, but instead standing heads above the rest of the people with a clear view of what had caused the crowd to increase their shouting. Curving around a twist in the road came the procession, led by armor-clad guards stony and silent, tranquil pillars in the middle of great emotion. Behind them were more guards who were shouting at and pushing back the swelling front lines of the

crowd. In the guards' midst was the man the traveller had come so far to see. He was staggering and hunched over with the weight of the heavy wooden cross he carried, bleeding but showing no signs of acknowledging his wounds. The man in the cart stood frozen, unbelieving he was seeing this with his own eyes. When the procession came near to him and the ever increasing roar of the crowd hit its climax and seemed to fill his head to the point of bursting, he snapped out of his trance and remembered. With unsteady hands he reached into his robes and pulled out the device, small, black, and rectangular.

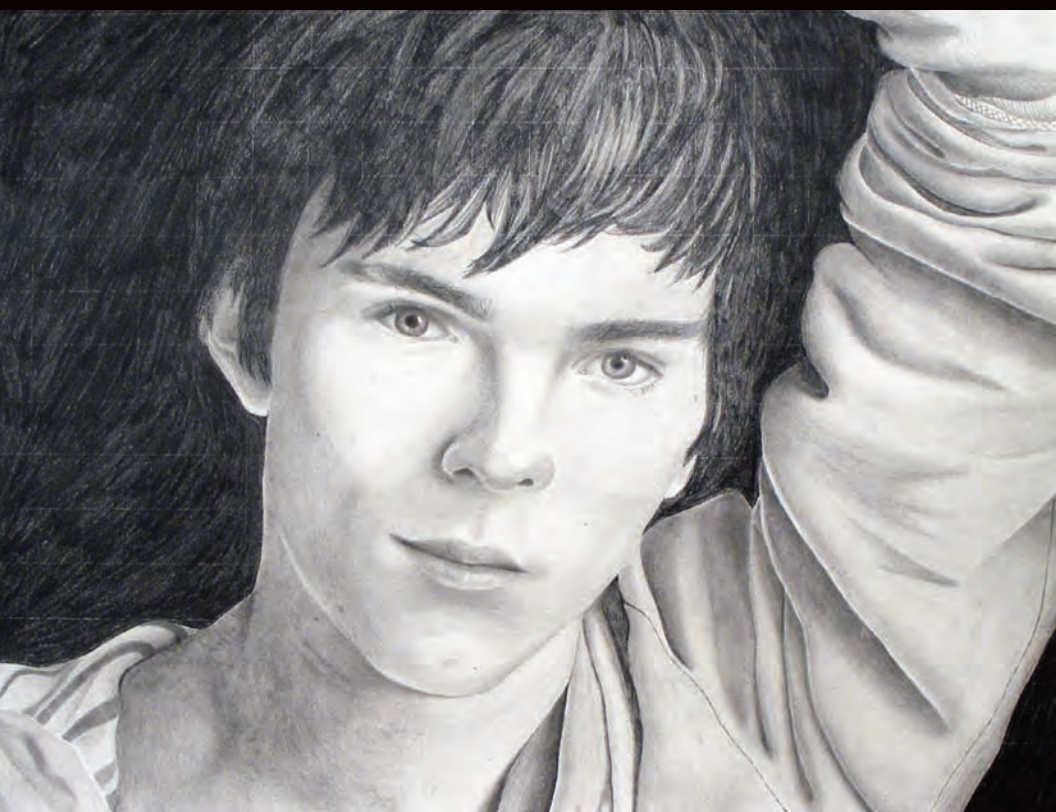
When the guards and their charge were as close to him as they would come, the man lifted the device to his face. Leaning over the edge of the cart to get as close to road as he could, he felt his finger press down without any conscious effort of his own; a moment in time was captured in suspension forever. He looked at it and saw his trip had been successful after all. Already he was imagining how different the world would be once he got home. He was so enthralled in the moment that he did not notice the others - other latecomers had seen the man standing in the cart and thought that he had stumbled upon a great way to get a better view and now scrambled to join him before they missed their chance to see. They paid no heed to the man and several of them bumped into him carelessly, the last jolt knocking the device from his sweating hands down onto the shoulder of a stranger below. The stranger looked up in surprise before reaching down and picking up the camera.

If it had been any other object he may have amiably handed it back, but this foreign object, never before seen by his eyes, sparked his curiosity and called for a closer look. He turned it over in his hands slowly several times before bringing it closer to his face to examine the illuminated screen, the photo just taken visible. The stranger stood without moving looking at it, then up to the now passed procession, then, eyebrows raised and eyes wide, up at the man in the cart. The man was unable to do anything but

offer his own blank stare in return, but the stranger's uncomprehending face now twisted, and he began shouting in unfamiliar words. The shouting attracted the attention of people nearby, and as the man's words became angrier and angrier, they spread to the lips of others. The man in the cart feared the attention but could do nothing to stop it; it seemed as if everyone were closing in on the cart with curses and pointing, accusing fingers. Before it was too late, he leapt to the ground to run but was grabbed immediately by a city guardsman.

The sky was now overcast and growing continuously darker. It was here among these hills that the crowd had migrated to, but now most of it had dispersed, leaving behind only a scattered few. The man looked down at them with eyes half open, but this time not from a cart. The pain in his arms and shoulders blurred his vision so that the people's expressions of scorn were unrecognizable to him. He could, if he strained, make out a dirty and ragged man in chains being prodded along in the direction of the city by spear points. The traveller labored to lift his face in time to see a black thundercloud pass in front of the Sun, darkening an already gloomy landscape. If I die here, he thought to himself, I will have never lived. He thought back to how the guardsman who had seized him examined the camera for himself before flinging it down and stomping it until it was nothing more than a smattering of fragmented pieces. The last sight he had of it was of a faceless spectator squatting down and scooping up the pieces and the dirt they rested on and scrambling off in the direction of the nearest flame. More than once the man had wondered how people of the past would respond if he were ever seen, now he knew: with fear, superstitious suspicion, and ultimately anger. As his senses dulled and his eyes drooped even heavier, he knew this would be the last time he would ever travel back in time; humans' fear of the unknown and of what they did not understand would be his final undoing. He painfully moved his head to his side and saw the

man on the cross in the middle was looking at him, a silent expression of understanding on his face. Somewhere in time, a child became unborn.



Nicholas Hoult Faith Birdwell

gone

shay'la
liller

Velvet flows from parted lips
Silk runs through my fingertips
Bloodshot eyes still see your face
Razor blades find veins to trace
She's too far gone
So let her go
The water drowns
As leaves turn brown
You look inside with blackened eyes
Don't trust the mirror it always lies
I know the place that she would go
Behind closed doors no one knows
She's too far gone
So let her be
She's content with misery
The water drowns
She's fallen down
Don't pick her up
Just let her bleed
Let the world fall to its knees
She's too far gone
So why not leave
The water drowns
You spin around
The water drowns
It pulls you down
And by the dawn
She's too far gone



Bob Marley Faith Birdwell





Birch Trees Grant Molnar

don't stop believing

angela
benfield

I was several weeks into third grade and had missed more than I had been there. I had missed three days this week to take care of my brother Rocky. After the fourth day I couldn't take the hunger pains anymore. I got out of the bed and quietly got Rocky out of his crib. He was ten months old, pale and thin, with dark blue circles under his eyes. I took him to the living room and changed his diaper. Next, I mixed the powder milk and water and tried to feed him. I knew what Mama's "fasting" was going to do to us if I didn't do something. I needed to go to school. I rocked him until he fell back to sleep, put him and a bottle in the playpen, and walked to school.

I always liked the walks to and from school. I would pick flowers and daydream. The closer I got to my private Catholic school, the bigger and prettier the houses would get. I would daydream Rocky and I lived in one of those houses with a mom and a dad, having breakfast together full of hugs and kisses. A smiling mom and dad would kiss each other goodbye for the day as the family would stand on the porch wishing him a good day. I know that sounds kind of lame now. Give me a break; I was only nine years old.

When I got to school that day, my plan seemed to be falling in place. Everyone was outside for morning recess, and the classrooms were empty. The closer I got to my class, the faster my heart was beating; I could feel my face starting to flush. I kept telling myself I was a good girl, I shouldn't be doing this, but I knew it had to be done. The first desk I looked in only had crackers, but the next, yes, a full lunch! A ham and cheese sandwich with the crust cut off, chips and a Dingdong. I figured that would be enough to get us through the night. I put it all in my backpack

and walked home. I didn't daydream on the way home that day. I felt too much guilt for the kid that didn't get his lunch, but I also felt like a soldier, doing what I had to do to take care of us. I could not call anyone for help because I knew they would take my brother.

When I got home, Rocky was still in the playpen, he was crying loudly. I found Mama on her knees, leaning over the toilet with scissors in her mouth. She was making weird, creepy growling noises and had tears flowing down her face. I leaned down and put my hand on her back as gently as I could and asked what she was doing. She looked up at me with a look of fear and panic. It made me feel so bad for her. I knew she couldn't help what was happening to her, and I could tell that she was truly scared. As she cried, she told me she was trying to cut the devil out of her throat. (The dangly thing in the back that nobody knows what it's called) I took the scissors out of her hand, told her to look up and open her mouth. For half a second I considered cutting it out, thinking maybe that would take away whatever evil had taken over her. I couldn't, I loved her too much to hurt her. So I held the scissors in her mouth for a few seconds, flushed the toilet, kissed her on the forehead, and told her "There you go Mama, he's gone, and you're okay now." That was a line I learned very quickly when she got sick. She went to lie down, I got Rocky out of the playpen, and we had our feast. It was so great to see him smile and hear him giggle again.

The next few days seemed to go okay. Every night at bedtime, Mama and I would lie there and talk. When she was lucid she was so loving, charming, beautiful, and funny. I loved those nights. Most nights she would either be on the floor praying and chanting for God to protect us from the demons or on her knees in the bed with a cross screaming, "SATAN LEAVE MY HOUSE" over and over, until she would finally pass out. I wanted to believe she really was possessed, then it would make sense, but that's the world of paranoid schizophrenia. As the days went on,

the worse she got. One morning she woke me up and told me we were going to Saudi Arabia. By this time I just agreed with whatever she said. That day I needed to make a trip to school. That day I got caught stealing a package of crackers out of someone's desk. I will never forget the guilt, humiliation and shame I felt that day. My teacher took me to an empty room and told me to sit there and wait. It seemed like hours. Finally a lady named Valerie walked in. She reminded me she was with the child protection agency. I remembered her. Valerie said my teacher had known for weeks I had been stealing food. When she asked why, I didn't know what to say. I knew if I told her, "God told my mama that we needed to fast for a month," so we had no food, I would lose my mama and brother forever, so I just sat silent. Valerie asked if my mother was home. I told her she was but, she was in the bed sick. Valerie wanted to take a ride by and just "touch base" with Mama.

Valerie drove me in her car; it was the coolest car, a little red two door. She put some music on and told me to relax, that everything would be okay. We rode to my house in silence except for Steve Perry telling us to "Don't stop believing." We got there and thank goodness, Mama was awake and cleaning house. Rocky was on the floor playing with Sukiyaiki, my pug dog Mama got me for my 5th birthday. I was so relieved that Mama was acting normal. Mama and Valerie sat down and talked. They came to the decision that I just needed discipline. As Valerie left, she slipped a piece of paper in my hand and whispered in my ear if I ever needed anything to call her.

Once Valerie was gone, I looked at Mama's gold eyes and saw the monster was back. I told her I didn't say anything, at all, to anyone about our family, and "I aint gonna steal again." So that night I had to sit at the kitchen table with a pen and notebook. My punishment was to write 100 lines of "aint isn't a word, aint means you're stupid." I had to switch hands several times, but I made it through fifty four lines when I heard Rocky screaming

an ear piercing scream. Then it just stopped, complete silence. I wasn't supposed to get up from the table until I was finished but I knew something wasn't right. I waited and listened but heard nothing. I got up, walked through the living room and into the hall way. Mama's bedroom door was cracked just enough to see her sitting on the edge of the bed, staring straight ahead. At that moment I knew my Mama was gone, and the monster had taken over completely. When I pushed the door, it seemed to have something behind it. On my side of the door I saw part of an orange extension cord. Then it hit me, I got dizzy, I felt like I was about to fall down, I felt sick to my stomach. I slowly pushed the door open enough to squeeze through it. Rocky's eyes were slightly bulging out, and his lips were turning blue. I unwrapped the cord from around his neck and laid his lifeless body in my lap. As I sat there, I decided I would have to kill my mother, but suddenly Rocky gasped for air. I stroked his head trying to calm him, hoping that would help. Once he started to cry, I knew he was okay. Mama never moved. She sat there on the edge of the bed-while I made a pallet in the closet of my bedroom. I locked my bedroom door and held Rocky until he fell asleep. During the night I would get up and peak out. Mama never moved from the edge of that bed.

The next night, Rocky and I were watching "The Greatest American Hero." Mom told me God had talked to her and told her to do something. My heart dropped. When "God" told her to do something, it was never a good thing. The night before, God told her to sacrifice her son and because she had faith, I saved Rocky for her. I could feel my body going numb, but I had to be strong. Then she said it was time for me to get in the tub. I had the tub a little over half full, hot water with a touch of cold because she always told me not to turn the cold on at all. It had to be only hot water to rid the demons off, but I always found a way to sneak in a little cold water, as to not have to go the hospital over burns again. I sat in the tub soaping up my washrag and lis-

tened to her babble about God, my alien father, and the CIA that had our house surrounded. She sat down by the tub, and I knew by the look in her eyes something was about to happen. She reached over and put her hand on my forehead, then began holding my head under the water; I was so scared, I knew I was going to drown. She was yelling, "Jesus, please take away her demons and baptize her in the name of the lord" over and over. I was crying and telling her, "Mama, I'm baptized! I'm baptized! The demons are gone Mama, I can feel them gone." I was in sheer panic, fighting as hard as I could. The last time she let me up for air, I looked in the eyes and told her, "There is no god, just kill me already." She backed up quickly, glared at me, then lunged and grabbed my arms and shook me, yelling, "Satan let my daughter go." She yanked me out of the bathtub and threw me on the floor. I remember how the cold cement tile felt against my burning skin. I will never forget the pattern of that floor. It looked like a bunch of octagon balls placed together.

The next morning Mama said we were going to Saudi Arabia (again). As always I just said "Ok." I went to school, simply to get away from her for a while. I walked my usual route but didn't daydream that day. When I got to school, everyone was in the chapel for morning worship. I went in and found my class on the front row and sat down. The girl next to me got up and went to Sister Mary and whispered something in her ear. Sister Mary immediately ran over and grabbed my arm and dragged me outside. She scolded me: "You smell awful, your hair has not been brushed, and your dress is unzipped. Go clean yourself up!" I should have felt humiliated, but I just felt weak and beaten. I went to the bathroom and cried. I felt helpless and confused. I must have stayed there for a while because Sister Mary came and found me. She asked me why I had been crying. I knew by now nobody could help. I told her my dog died; that's why I was crying, but I was okay now. She walked me to class. That day at afternoon recess the kids called me names and threw rocks at me. I

didn't even care. I just sat there and watched them, as did Sister Mary.

Walking home that day, as I turned on my street, I saw several people in our front yard. It looked like we were having a garage sale. Neighbors were walking away with their arms full; I saw my bike on the curb in a pile of trash. The stereo that Mama and I used to sit in front of was on the lawn with toys and clothes scattered about. When I went inside the house, it was completely empty. Mama said she gave all our stuff away because God told her we didn't need material things. She told me to help her board up the windows and doors. I will never know where she got all that plywood. By late that evening the house was boarded up. We sat in the living room floor with candles, crackers, and water. Mama took turns holding me and my brother. She told me some things about life, such as how to get boys to like me and that one day I would have something called a period, but not to be scared. I fell asleep with my head in her lap, and Rocky snuggled in my arms. The next morning I was awakened by my grandma beating on the door, calling our names, but Mama wouldn't let me answer her. Soon after, I heard men yelling, "Rosemary are you in there? You need to answer us." Again Mama put her hand over my mouth and her fingers over her lips: "Shh." Suddenly the wood on the door came down, and several police with their guns drawn were yelling. Mom was screaming, Rocky was screaming, the police were screaming; however, I was still numb, as I had been for days. I just sat there. The police grabbed Mom, threw her on the ground, and cuffed her. Valerie was there, I had called her the day before, and she gently took Rocky from me, took my hand, and led us outside. As we got in her little red two door car, I looked back and saw the police walking Mama to their car; she stopped and looked back at me. I knew then I would never see her again, and I will never forget the look of defeat in her eyes. My mother was gone, dead in a sense, but I still had my brother, and I just had to keep in mind "Don't Stop Believing."²



Cezanne's Still Life Grant Molnar

slipstream

landon
morvant

Slipstream, bright lights
And the sky of the night
Deadly friction of intentions, heightened sense,
Breathtaking apathy, insanity some would say
Curves for her performance, faster, stable
Heart pulsating upon intentions ceasing,
A rush that would never be forgotten,
Vision blurred and a test of courage,
On a road occupied by obstacles that stand still
Nature works against, but press through
For fantasies are never good left unsatisfied



Summer Harvest Diana Wollschlaeger

the deep blue empty

christopher
gonzales

The Lady Madrid is a mighty sailing vessel, and a monstrous typhoon has found her. This malicious storm is filled with battering winds and violent intent, and she is pummeling this Herculean vessel into mulch. The Madrid is being carried up mountains of water to just be tossed into valleys of salty death. This galleon and its cargo are listing to and fro, dashing its fragile occupants against the creaky oaken hull. Soul shattering screams of a pregnant passenger in the throes of labor can be heard below the gale, and above three decks while exhausted sailors fight to keep their dear ship above the waves and away from the cold crushing darkness of this vengeful storm.

Doctor Samuelson is a drunkard of a physician, and he is horrendously ill-equipped to handle such a situation. The last time he saw a woman, or more importantly her “parts,” was months and months ago in Madame LeFervor’s house of ill-repute unless you consider Ensign Smyth’s full back tattoo of a nude Polynesian woman as a learning tool. Samuelson is not prepared and never will be.

The staggering doctor chokes down the last swig of his ship born concoction and sets to work. Calling out orders to various nameless faces “fetch me some water” and “gather the cleanest cloth you can find,” all of which are followed to the tee. A deluge of water above is traded with a river of blood below. The doctor cannot stop the flow, and he knows that all is lost for the young mother, but this child can still be gotten. Samuelson looks to the father and can see that the knowledge of his mate’s future is already there. He tells the young woman to push as he pulls. He and she scream in torturous cadence as the clouds and the sky and the water and the ship all scream in a choir of chaos. It is in this

very moment life is given and taken in a tidal surge of crimson.

The woman and her husband are rocking in unison with the belligerent sways of this colossal ship. Her screams are now whimpers, but they still fill the hold; they are deafening in sadness and consume this young man's breaking heart. Her pangs become his as she screams a new life into this world of a most certain death. Surrounded by murderous waves and a shattered sky, a new life has been brought into this world of endings. One life begins as her mother's passing life fades into the porous recesses of this tragically doomed ship. The screams and pathetic whimpers are replaced with the shrill cries of a newborn and silent sobs of a husband, watching his lover's vitality being washed away with the cold emptiness of death's embrace.

Tears and mourning engulfed in the screams of a newborn are all short lived. The rickety creaking and snapping of timbers can be heard throughout the ship's innards. Groaning and flexing, twisting and cracking, the Madrid's poor ribs and planks finally give way, and she relents to the onslaught of Neptune's fury. With her back broken, the floating coffin begins taking on water and fast, nearly as fast as this new father's desire to follow his lover's trip into the great void of nothingness.

Samuelson will not allow this wish to come to fruition, for this ship will never see port again, and she will spend the rest of her life moored upon the floor of this restless sea. The Madrid will be taken away piece by piece slowly because time's cruelty to man's creations is eternal.

The doctor moves with a quickness saved only for the doomed. He rushes to procure a solution for this baby's inevitable demise, and with only moments and an empty powder keg, he creates either a shelter or a casket for this child's future. He packs the soiled rags from her mother's bedside into the cask and drags her father topside. Samuelson hands the nameless child to her father and tells him, "You have to jump, get away from the ship before she pulls you down with us." The father, amazed by this

old sailor's bravado, asks, "What's your name?" The doctor is surprised by this question, and he replies, "Samuelson, Franklin Samuelson" Knowing that someone will know his name long after he has been entombed in the countless fathoms below, a broken smile creeps across his old weathered face. Franklin brings himself back to this fleeting and tells the young father to "Jump, swim away from the ship. She will not let you go without a fight. Once she has gone under, wait, and you will find plenty to keep you above the waves." With these last few words, he gives the man a gigantic shove, and with the keg in his arms, the father leaps.

They fall into the white frothy waves that are creating jaws of devastating destruction. A ravenous animal hell-bent on human blood, the crushing seas snap at the disheveled pair as the father and his child in tow fight to survive this endless night. The Madrid begins her final voyage to the sea floor; her undertow grabs the young family and drags them beneath the salty blanket. Deeper and deeper they go, and the crushing pressure threatens to shatter this poor man's skull. Farther they sink until finally the Madrid lets go, and the man and his daughter rocket to the surface.

There they float up to the lightening filled sky and down to the depths of darkness. Up and down, up and down, up and down they go. The father rests his head on the side of the sealed cask, listening intently for a sound, a movement, anything. He waits for a clue, a sign to let him know the fate of this poor newborn, this nameless baby girl who should be in the warm embrace of her mother's arms, but is instead floating aimlessly into oblivion. His heart stops, and tears mixed with the stinging seas cover his face. He listens harder and deeper trying to find any sign, anything. Then a sound, a whimper, or is it just his dreams? A scared scream, his baby girl is alive, but for how long?

As the father and his child rock in the stormy waters, the poor Madrid's remains start to fill the turbulent waves. Throughout the night the father collects and builds onto his flotilla.

Through the storm and the crashing seas, he insures at least a few more days of his survival, but he fears that his baby's fate is sealed.

With the last of his and the typhoon's energy, he begins to drift into nightmare filled dreams. His poor lover's screams fill his memories, then he hears what sounds like an animal. He jumps to his knees, and to his amazement, fighting the waning storms waves is a goat, trying with all her might to reach the floating island. He calls to the frightened animal, and with the goat's last fight for life, she swims to salvation. Holding onto his baby and listening to her screams, the father knows that this goat will give his daughter a fighting chance. The lonesome trio is exhausted, drifting towards the flat horizon and across the deep blue empty.



Van Gogh's Irises Yancey Cox

beautiful one

shay'la
liller

Never have I ever met a girl
so full of life
yet so debilitatingly empty
She saw the beauty in everything except
herself

She grew her hair
to hide her face
Broke all the mirrors
to prevent stinging
disgrace

She bit her nails
in anxious delight
and shook her foot
as time flew by

And all the while
she hated herself
He only loved her more
And all that time
she planned her demise
he planned ahead their life

The broken and the lonely
are the ones who know the truth
Her glossy eyes tried desperately
to avoid that proof

The light always shone to her
absorbed into her skin
her lips spoke not a word
though her internal heart grew
sick

She lost herself inside her mind
Danced a slow song with her demons
He searched his whole life
but could never find
the secret world she lived in

She laid down her head
for one last time
She sunk deeper to the bottom
and in descent found her peace
His heart reminisced in
agony

Never have I ever met a girl
so full of life,
yet so debilitatingly empty
She saw the beauty in everything
except herself
and maybe that is why she was so
beautiful.



Good Boy Christopher Gonzales

meet the artists

Angela Benfield fears the apocalypse, but in the meantime can watch a whole series on Netflix in a week. Her pet peeves involve people who use the words, near-miss, irregardless or ATM machine since it literally means automated teller machine machine. When she was five, she used all of her mother's nail polish to decorate the walls in her bedroom closet.

The worst job **Faith Birdwell** has ever had was working at an ice cream shop because of the freezing atmosphere. Because she has the skill of speaking French and German, her dream job is to work as a translator.

Zachary Cates has had too many embarrassing moments to name, but one of his best memories was seeing his favorite band live for the first time.

Yancey Cox's inspiration comes from family and a youth pastor, and finding God was her life changing moment.

Melanie Curry's mother gave her children's books that instead of reading, she would creatively fold the pages in different ways. She made a life changing move from nursing to graphic design in order to pursue her dream of becoming a graphic artist.

Lauren Gelpi has had a reoccurring dream of her teeth falling out, and her pet peeve is conformity. Her inspiration comes from her mother who is an amazing artist which led her to her dream job of being an art therapist.

Chris Gonzales can first remember his creativity when at the age of five he unsuccessfully painted a topless mermaid from the wall of his dad's "man cave." His pet peeve is people who cannot rise

above stereotypes, and his worst fears are: “Snakes, snakes, snakes (did I mention snakes?) and small rodents.”

Shay’la Liller began expressing herself in the second grade when her teacher would encourage her to write stories in booklets that she took home. Virginia Woolf is Shay’la’s inspiration because of her forthright writing style, and Shay’la would love to one day work in a prominent museum as a linguistic anthropologist.

Will McGrew’s pet peeve is the word pet peeve. Outside of doing impersonations, he has a penchant for traveling as evidenced through his two month trek documenting a band.

Grant Molnar’s embarrassing moments elude him, but there’s a pretty good chance a girl was involved. He is so fully involved with his art that he hopes to become a master painter one day, and his life changing moment revolved around moving his father with a one of his creations.

Since middle school, **Thomas Wiltheis** has been writing and through the years has been inspired by Robert Frost, William Butler Yeats, and Marion Zimmer Bradley. His dream job would be to work in Washington D.C. where he would create a better future for everyone.

Diana Wollschlaeger has always written, drawn, or painted as evidenced by storybooks her mother still owns from when she was four. Her inspiration once came from her highschool art teacher who brought out her best work, but today her children inspire her through their “fantastic” parenting skills. She says, “I want to be like them when I grow up.”

missed your chance?

If you missed us this time around, you can start submitting your pieces for the spring! Just go to www.bpcc.edu/savoirfaire for submission guidelines or call 318-678-6364 for more information.



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